

them head on. That is, after all, what brought us together in Miami and Santiago, and will sustain us as we move ahead.

The gap between our rich and poor remains too large. And in the new economy, we face the added challenge of preventing a digital divide. Our emerging democracies lack strong institutions. Our social policies have room for improvement.

Many look upon the powerful forces of economic globalization and technological change as the source of these profound problems. But Canada looks upon them as the key to solving them. To creating untold opportunities and shared prosperity from Tierra Del Fuego to Baffin Island.

We should neither fear the challenge of globalization, nor become blinded by its allure. Rather, we must develop the tools so that all of La Gran Familia can reap its full potential. We must, in short, adopt an agenda that puts people first. That recognizes that our citizens can reach their full potential only when their safety is guaranteed, their rights are respected and their access to economic and social opportunities is assured.

In Quebec City, we will do just that. We have taken as our themes three complementary areas: strengthening democracy, creating prosperity and realizing human potential. And we want to harness the information highway to support this agenda. To foster "connectivity" throughout La Gran Familia.

Democracy and the effective rule of law are the guardians of human security. But such security is unlikely to be sustained in conditions of poverty and unequal opportunity. Realizing human potential through effective social policies is the guarantee that will allow democracy and prosperity to flourish.

Democracy has clearly been on the rise in the Americas over the past decade. But its progress has been neither constant nor equal. And in many countries it remains fragile. Canada wishes to see a clear and forceful commitment to strengthening democracy and fostering social inclusion in Quebec City. Which extends to our democratic institutions, our electoral machinery, and the impartiality of justice. To protecting human rights and freedom of expression. To fighting drug trafficking and corruption.

It will mean empowering local governments and safeguarding the rights of minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants and the disabled. And making the strongest possible pledge to promoting the legal, economic and social equality of women and men.

In Santiago, we formally launched negotiations on the Free Trade Area of the Americas. And we challenged ourselves to achieve it by 2005.

The goal of achieving an FTAA by 2005 is one to which Canada is deeply committed—by temperament and history. We understand the connection between freer trade, prosperity and social progress. And we see an FTAA—with increased transparency and clearer rules—as the best way of forging that same connection throughout the hemisphere. For big nations and for small.

By the same token, we understand that it cannot be about trade alone. It is not just a contract among corporations and governments. First and foremost, it is an agreement among—and about—people. It must be holistic in nature. It must include improving the efficiency of financial markets, protecting labour rights and the environment, and having better development cooperation. It must include engaging the private sector, international financial institutions and civil society in a dialogue directed at encouraging greater corporate social responsibility.

These are the sorts of challenges we will be addressing in Quebec.

Canada also believes that progress in strengthening democratic institutions and increasing prosperity in the new economy must go hand in hand with actions to enhance social and economic inclusion. That will increase access to education and skills development. Promote life-long learning. And broaden access to quality health care and effective disease-prevention programs.

And we must achieve this in a way that respects the value of the diverse ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious strands that, woven together, make up the fabric of La Gran Familia.

Canada is also very much focused on bridging the digital divide in the Americas. As the information revolution continues, governments have a pivotal role to play in determining how these new technologies evolve. And in ensuring that their ability to bridge vast distances, expand access to knowledge and increase economic productivity is shared equitably.

In Canada we have taken great strides in this area by forming creative partnerships that have allowed us to connect all of our public schools and communities at relatively low cost.

In many ways, our meeting in Quebec City will be about coming to terms with an increasingly engaged civil society and its concerns over the powerful forces that are shaping our modern world.

Canada believes that openness and transparency are vital to building public acceptance and legitimacy for our undertakings. In preparing for the Summit, Canada has engaged civil society organizations at the national level. We have also promoted regional consultations with committed and serious organizations, including meetings here at the OAS, and establishing web-sites for the sharing of information.

Canada worked hard to make the OAS General Assembly in Windsor a more open event, allowing our citizens to see an historic discussion on the nature of democracy and its status among our membership. We must commit ourselves to working with patience, persistence and reason to build a hemispheric future full of promise. A future that takes account of the concerns expressed by our peoples and the impact that the new forces at work in the global economy are having on our citizens. As host of the first Summit of the Americas in the new millennium, Canada will do its utmost to promote openness and transparency, while ensuring productive discourse among governments.

I wish to conclude today on a note of strong support for the OAS. We can all be proud of its accomplishments. The leadership of Secretary General Gárriga has been inspired and responsive to the wishes of our membership.

The past year has illustrated the relevance of the OAS. From helping to shore up democracy to resolving complicated border disputes. From ensuring electoral fairness to promoting technical cooperation.

More than any other single institution, the OAS will be charged with acting upon the mandates we endorse at Quebec City. To do this it will require a tangible expression of our political will and a commitment to its fiscal health. Our foreign ministers should actively address this issue at this year's OAS General Assembly in Costa Rica.

My friends, working with you to make our vision of La Gran Familia of the Americas a reality is a cornerstone of Canadian foreign policy. For many years, the Maple Leaf flag did not hang in this historic room. Cana-

dians felt that our national journey was taking a different path than that of the Americas. Those days are gone . . . forever.

Let us now journey together into the new millennium. With shared conviction, strength and purpose.

Obrigado.

Muchas gracias y hasta pronto en Quebec.

HONORING JOHN BURNS

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2001

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the achievements of John Burns, the Executive Director of the Housing Authority of Santa Clara County. I would like to recognize Mr. Burns' extraordinary and tireless service to the people of Santa Clara County and thank him for his 32 years as the Housing Authority's Executive Director.

John Burns started as the Santa Clara County Housing Authority's first employee in 1968; the Agency now employs a staff of 275. The Housing Authority currently assists over 13,000 families, seniors and disabled in the Section 8 Program and over 2,000 seniors and disabled in the Property Management Program. In addition, the Agency manages 50 duplexes at the Arturo Ochoa Migrant Housing Center in Gilroy, California, which houses 100 families during the harvest season. In the winter months, the center is used for housing homeless families.

Under John Burns' dedicated leadership, the Housing Authority diversified its many services to the community to include leasing of housing on the open market, new housing construction, and the management of housing for low income families, disabled and the elderly. The Housing Authority also ensures, through sales of bonds, that new construction in the area includes affordable rental units. The successful effort to pass Measure A in the November 1999 election allowed the Housing Authority greater opportunities to provide affordable housing in areas where it is needed and where the agency had previously not been able to build.

Among Housing Authorities, the Santa Clara County Housing Authority has one of the highest profiles in the country and is considered a leader when it comes to creating innovative, affordable housing.

A leader in the field as well as in the community, Mr. Burns has served on the Board of Directors for the National Leased Housing Association as well as the Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition. He is a member and former President of the Northern California Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies, and a member and former President of the Executive Directors Association of Northern California and Nevada.

John Burns was once quoted in a news article that "I would rather achieve public visibility through results of our programs . . . not public relations." This "low profile leader" is one of the most respected Housing Authority Directors in the County, a visionary public servant, and a valued friend.